

endeavor in the United States is accompanied by a media campaign. But when we decided to ask for this, a lot of people thought we had slipped a gasket, because it made General McCaffrey and the whole effort so subject to cheap political attack. But in fairness to the Members of Congress, there was very little of it. And everyone understood that this was not a Democratic or a Republican issue, this was an American issue. And we had to reach our children however we could, whenever we could, in the best way that we could. So I thank you, General, for one more time risking a bullet for America's future.

I want to say, when these things start, I hope they will remind the parents, the teachers, the coaches, the religious leaders that they have to take the lead in making our children strong enough to take the right stands and turn away from drugs. This is not—this war on drugs, as it's often called, is somehow misleading, I think, in the sense that its not an offensive against a single enemy conducted by a single army. Instead, it's more like one of the Lieutenant Britton's hobbies. She just ran in a marathon race where there are lots of people running at different paces in different ways; everyone that finishes ought to get a medal. And it requires strength and determination and conditioning and unbelievable patience. It requires also a certain courage never, never to stop in the face of the relentless obstacles ahead. That's what this is. We're making progress in this marathon. The Coast Guard is leading the way. But all of us have a role to play, and we better determine to play it if we expect the 21st century to be America's best years. That's what I expect, and I think you do, too.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. at the U.S. Coast Guard Station. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Megan Britton, USCG, Duty Officer, Seventh District Command Center; Adm. Robert E. Kramek, USCG, Coast Guard Commandant; Rear Adm. Norm Saunders, USCG, Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District; Vice Adm. Roger T. Rufe, USCG, Commander, Atlantic Area; Gen. Charles E. Wilhelm, USMC, Commander in Chief, U.S. Southern Command; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe; and Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Gubernatorial Candidate Buddy MacKay in Miami

December 11, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. You all calm down now; we don't want to be too rowdy. [Laughter] You've got to save some of this for the spring and the summer and the fall, so that on election day you have maximum enthusiasm and energy for Buddy MacKay for Governor. I want you to do that.

Let me say, I am very honored to be here today. I want to thank so many people, but let me first say that Representative Kendrick Meek made such a good speech I thought the rest of us were going to be superfluous. Repetition is important, and he did it in a beautiful and eloquent way. And I thank him for his—for representing Florida's future so well.

I thank Attorney General Bob Butterworth for being my friend and for being with me for a long time and for his strong support of Lieutenant Governor MacKay. I thank Lawton Chiles for his great leadership of the State of Florida. He has done a wonderful, wonderful job. And he has helped me to be a better President, as well as to do a better job for the people of Florida. I will never forget it. And he showed us all 4 years ago how to win a tough election, and I haven't forgotten, Buddy MacKay hasn't forgotten, and all of you haven't forgotten. Let's bring our lessons to the table and push this thing forward next November. We can do it.

Thank you, Jim Pugh, and all the others who worked so hard to make this a success. And thank all of you for giving your contributions to Buddy MacKay. It is not easy to run a campaign, and they are not inexpensive. And normally our side is running against people who have more money than we do. But the important thing is not whether they have more, it's just whether we have enough. If our side has enough to get our message out, we'll be all right. And you've taken a major step in that direction today, and we are profoundly grateful to you.

Let me just take a couple of minutes of your time to tell you what I think this election is about and why I am here almost a year before. First of all, Florida is important to

America. It's not only one of the biggest States in America, it represents every good thing that is going on as we hurtle into the 21st century and presents almost all the challenges our country faces as we move into the 21st century. Just think about it. You have a booming economy and you have a gorgeous environment and you have the conflict between the two. How are you going to preserve your natural resources? Can we restore the Everglades? Will there be enough water here 5, 10, 15, 20, 50 years from now?

Then you have a wonderfully diverse culture with people coming from every country in our hemisphere and increasingly from all over the world. And you have some of the conflicts that that occasions. We have people living together and working together; we also have the challenges of crime and welfare. We have a place that people come to because they feel better and they feel healthier. And I can tell you, even though I didn't get here until after 2 o'clock last night, it still felt good when I got off the airplane after having stood in the snow in New York yesterday. So people come here because they feel good and they feel healthy, but you've got a whole lot of kids that don't have health insurance.

So you have the challenges and the joys and the opportunities of 21st century America writ large. It matters to America what happens in Florida. It matters to America whether Florida can meet its challenges and move forward together. That's the first thing.

The second thing I want to say is that what the previous speakers said about the leadership Florida has enjoyed under the Chiles-MacKay team was not just political luncheon rhetoric. This State is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. It has been very, very well led. And you should be very proud of that, and it matters who has these jobs.

It's also true that Lawton, as he said, and Buddy have had a remarkable partnership. And I did study up on the details a little when Al Gore and I took office, and the thing I liked the best was what Lawton said about—he got to do the good stuff and the Lieutenant Governor got to do the bad stuff. I've tried to implement that at every turn in Washington—[laughter]—with mixed levels of success, I might add. But I've done my very best.

I do think, you know, that it's clear that the Vice President has had more influence and a wider range of activity by far than any Vice President in history, in no small measure because I believe that's the way we ought to work. We ought to make maximum use of the talents of all of the people who can serve. And I saw when I looked at Lawton Chiles and Buddy MacKay that it could work, and so I am indebted in that way as well.

Finally, let me say, just on a personal note, I'm here because in 1991, when I started to run for President and only my mother thought I had a chance to win—[laughter]—Buddy MacKay stood up and stood by me in the straw poll in Florida and stayed with me in the darkest hours of my campaign. And when all the experts said that Bill Clinton is dead, he will be a minor footnote in history, we have to get somebody—in every election—he's the one we got out this time—Buddy MacKay said, "I don't think so. I think I'll stay right there." And so I'm staying right here. I feel very good being here with my friend.

There's something to be said for that. You ask, what do you want in a Governor? You want charisma, you want eloquence, you want somebody that's worked a lifetime and produced something for you. One thing you want is somebody who will stick right there, just pure old-fashioned personal strength of conviction. And all I know is I have no doubt that if any one of you or your beloved State were in trouble, he'd be the last guy to abandon ship. And that's important. I know it because I have seen it, and it matters in a leader of a State or a nation.

Now, anybody can rock along with you when the times are good or when the circumstances are comfortable or when there's just another nice little media event to do. It's quite another thing to stand there when the times are tough but the stakes are high. And you should be very proud of that.

Now, let me ask you this: What do you want in a Governor? What do you want? What do you want for your State? If I were to make the argument, I would say first of all, what we do works. And at some point, no matter how good our friends in the Republican Party are with their rhetoric, with their attacks, with their characterization,

sometimes, sooner or later, results should be rewarded.

You know, when I ran for President, remember what this country was going—we had high unemployment, stagnation, drift, division. And they had been telling us for 12 years that the Government was the problem and they were going to get it out of our lives. Meanwhile, they had quadrupled the national debt, and the deficit was \$290 billion a year. Crime was up; they didn't like it. Welfare was up; they didn't like it. They just didn't do anything about it.

And we said, consistent with, as the previous speakers have said, what we've tried to do with the Democratic Leadership Council, look, we don't think Government is the solution, but we don't think it's the problem either. We think it should be a partner. We don't believe Government can do everything, but neither do we want Government to go AWOL and sit on the sidelines. We believe the job of Government is to create the condition and give people the tools to solve their own problems, fulfill their own dreams, and make their communities in this country what it ought to be. That's what we stood for. And we said, look, we're going to have to do some things differently. If we want to restore the economy, rebuild the middle class, reclaim the future for our children, we have to do some things differently. We have to have different policies, policies that favor the future over the past, policies that help not just a few, and policies that unite us instead of policies that divide us for short-term political gain.

And so we have worked at that. And we have worked in partnership with your leaders here. And you heard Bob Butterworth say what the results were. We had a \$290 billion deficit the day I took office; it was \$22 billion this year. Ninety-two percent of the work was done by a Democratic economic plan before the last balanced budget passed. The lowest unemployment and the lowest crime rates in 24 years, and all we did on crime—does the Federal Government have anything to do with the crime rate? It depends on whether it's a good partner.

I'd heard all this talk all these years, but I was living out there in America like you. So I said, we're going to pass a crime bill

that is, in effect, written by local prosecutors and police officers and community workers trying to save our kids. And that's why we said, let's put 100,000 police on the street; let's take the assault weapons off the street; let's stop selling handguns to people with criminal records; and let's give our kids something to say yes to when they get out of school in the afternoon. And it's worked. It's worked.

In this last balanced budget bill, we got the biggest increase in investment for child health since 1965; it will help to insure 5 million people. But it will be done at the State level. Which Governor do you trust more to insure the largest number of people over the next 5, 6 years?

In this balanced budget bill, we've got the largest new investment in education since 1965 and a commitment to set higher standards and a commitment to accountability. And we opened the doors of college wider than we had in 50 years, since the GI bill passed. But the work of implementing these things has to be done at the State level. Who do you trust to stand up for opportunity and excellence and accountability in education and giving Florida the kind of schools you need for the 21st century? Buddy.

There are high stakes here. We have a good record; we have gotten results; we have done it by working together. Our theory of Government was right, and theirs was wrong. And you can see it in the evidence. But the most important thing is, look at Florida's future. You have to reconcile education opportunity as well as excellence in standards. You have to figure out how to continue to grow this economy, but you have got to stick up for the integrity of the Florida environment. Why have all these people moved here in the first place? Who do you trust to protect the environment of Florida for the 21st century?

Audience members. Buddy!

The President. So there are three issues: the environment, the economy, education and health care for children. And I can give you lots more. It is the nature of what we are trying to do in Washington to have a lot of this work actually done at the State and local level. If there is a partnership—and I'm trying to do what you want me to do, to set

the direction for the country but not to try to direct the country, to set the direction, and then let people in their local communities solve their own problems—then the Governors of this country become more important than ever before.

So Florida is in better shape than it was. The ideas that we've espoused have been proved right. And he is the person you can best trust to deal with the challenges of the future. That sounds like a pretty good case to me, and if you go out there and make it for a year, I don't care what other arguments are made, I don't care how much money is brought into play against him, I don't care what other national political currents are supposed to be bearing down on Florida and who is trying to get this electoral bloc or that one—just ask the people of Florida to vote for their children and their future and forget about the politics, and Buddy MacKay will be the next Governor of Florida.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:27 p.m. at the Radisson Mart Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to State Representative Kendrick Meek; Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; and Jim Pugh, general chairman, MacKay Campaign for Governor.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Miami

December 11, 1997

Thank you very much. Well, thank you very much. Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Penelas, Lieutenant Governor MacKay, and to Chris and Gene and Mitch Berger—I thank all three of them for all the work they did to make this night a sterling success.

I thank Governor Romer and Dan Dutko and Alan Solomont for the work that the DNC has done. And about the only thing harder than being President on a regular basis is trying to do a stand-up comedy routine at a fundraiser. And I thought they were both great, so let's give them another hand. I thought they were great. *[Applause]*

You know, I have a lot of friends in this crowd tonight. Many of you have been with me for a long time. And today I had two immensely satisfying experiences. First, I went out on a Coast Guard cutter and met

with a number of people in the Coast Guard who are working to protect the borders of our country here off the coast of southern Florida. In the last year they have had a 1,000 percent increase in the number of arrests and a 300 percent increase in the volume of drug confiscations because of their efforts. And I just went to encourage them and to thank them. And then we had, earlier today, a marvelous kick-off fundraiser for Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay's campaign for Governor. And many of you said something to me about that.

I want to thank you for being here for the Democratic Party. I want to thank you for being here for the people of south Florida, for the people of Miami-Dade County. This State has been extraordinarily good to me. My first real victory, when I started running for President, was in the Florida Democratic Convention straw poll in December of 1991. I will never forget that.

And we came very close to carrying Florida in 1992. And I strongly felt that we could and would carry it in 1996 because of the opportunity that so many of you gave me to work with you—for sensible immigration policies, for sensible policies toward our neighbors in this hemisphere, for sensible policies on crime and drugs and housing and economic growth, for sensible partnerships for the State of Florida, and one of the most important things we've done since I've been President, for an aggressive effort to save the Florida Everglades. Thank you all for the opportunities you have given me.

If you look at Florida, which in so many ways represents where America is going, with all of its opportunities and its challenges, a State full of people who are older—well, we're all getting older, and life expectancies are going up. And I don't know about you, but with every passing day I like that more and more. I think that's a fine idea. *[Laughter]* Florida, a State where people from all over the world are living here. We're all getting more diverse all over America; a State with high-tech employment and with people who are dying to work who don't have much education; a State with a lot of innovative partnerships to solve problems like crime and drugs, and on occasion, too much crime and drugs; a State with enormous economic